

I INTERRUPTED OBAMA BECAUSE WE NEED TO BE HEARD

By Jennicet Gutiérrez published on Washington Blade, June 25, 2015

Pride celebrations of the LGBTQ community are taking place throughout the nation. The community takes great pride in celebrating our diversity and the progress we have made throughout the years. However, for the immigrant LGBTQ community progress has not been fully realized because of the continuous discrimination and violence we face in our daily lives.



and violence we face in our *Photo of Jennicet Gutiérez holding a transgender flag.*

I was fortunate to be invited to the White House to listen to President Obama's speech recognizing the LGBTQ community and the progress being made. But while he spoke of 'trans women of color being targeted,' his administration holds LGBTQ and trans immigrants in detention. I spoke out because our issues and struggles can no longer be ignored.

Immigrant trans women are 12 times more likely to face discrimination because of our gender identity. If we add our immigration status to the equation, the discrimination increases. Transgender immigrants make up one out of every 500 people in detention, but we account for one out of five confirmed sexual abuse cases in ICE custody.

The violence my trans sisters face in detention centers is one of torture and abuse. The torture and abuse come from ICE officials and other detainees in these detention centers. I have spoken with my trans immigrant sisters who were recently released from detention centers. With a lot of emotional pain and heavy tears in their eyes, they opened up about the horrendous treatment they all experienced. Often seeking asylum to escape threats of violence because of their gender identity and sexuality, this is how they're greeted in this country. At times misgendered, exposed to assault, and put in detention centers with men.

Last night I spoke out to demand respect and acknowledgement of our gender expression and the release of the estimated 75 transgender immigrants in detention right now. There is no pride in how LGBTQ immigrants are treated in this country and there can be no celebration with an administration that has the ability to keep us detained and in danger or release us to freedom.

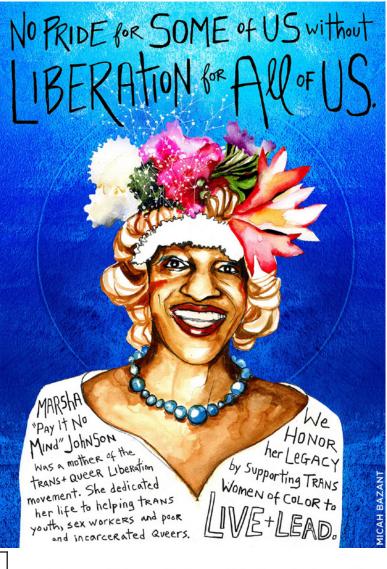
Black and Pink 614 Columbia Rd Dorchester, MA 02125

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PRESORTED STD U.S. POSTAGE PAID BOSTON, MA PERMIT NO. 1475 It is heartbreaking to see how raising these issues were received by the president and by those in attendance. In the tradition of how Pride started, I interrupted his speech because it is time for our issues and struggles to be heard. I stood for what is right. Instead of silencing our voices, President Obama can also stand and do the right thing for our immigrant LGBTQ community.

Jennicet Gutiérrez is an undocumented trans Latina leader with FAMILIA TQLM in the campaign for #Not1More lgbtq deportation.

"As I reflect on what just happened at the White House, I am outraged at the lack of leadership that Obama demonstrated. He had no concern for the way that LGBTQ detainees are suffering. As a transwoman, the misgendering and the physical and sexual abuse -- these are serious crimes that we face in detention centers. How can that be ignored? It's heartbreaking to see the LGBTQ community I am part of turning their back on me, and the LGBTQ people in detention centers: how can they tolerate that kind of abuse?" - Jennicet Gutiérrez



A drawing of Marsha P. Johnson by Micah Bizant
The text reads "No Pride for Some of us without liberation for all of us. Marsha "Pay it No
Mind" Johnson was a mother of the trans + queer liberation movement. She dedicated her
life to helping trans youth, sex workers and poor and incarcered queers. We honer her legacy
by supporting trans women of color to live + lead.

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Statement of Purpose

Black & Pink is an open family of LGBTQ prisoners and "free world" allies who support each other. Our work toward the abolition of the prison industrial complex is rooted in the experience of currently and formerly incarcerated people. We are outraged by the specific violence of the prison industrial complex against LGBTQ people, and respond through advocacy, education, direct service, and organizing.

Black & Pink is proudly a family of people of all races

About this Newspaper

Since 2007, Black & Pink free world volunteers have pulled together a monthly newspaper primarily composed of material written by our family's incarcerated members. In response to letters we receive, more prisoners receive the newspaper each issue!

This month, the newspaper is being sent to over: **7,544** prisoners!

Disclaimer:

Please note that the ideas and opinions expressed in the Black & Pink Newspaper are solely those of the authors and artists and do not necessarily reflect the views of Black & Pink. Black & Pink makes no representations as to the accuracy of any statements made in the Newspaper, including but not limited to legal and medical information. Authors and artists bear sole responsibility for their work. Everything published in the Newspaper is also on the internetit can be seen by anyone with a computer. By sending a letter to "Newspaper Submissions," you are agreeing to have your piece in the Newspaper and on the internet. For this reason, we only publish First Names and State Location to respect people's privacy. Pieces may be edited to fit our anti-oppression values and based on our Editing

THANKS AGAIN TO THE NEARLY 1,600 MEMBERS WHO COMPLETED OUR SURVEY THIS FALL! YOU WILL BE RECEIVING A CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION IN THE MAIL.

This month's header is by Benito G in CA.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS TO HOT PINK!

Seeking erotic short stories, poems, AND ART by Black & Pink incarcerated and free-world family members for a new 'zine. To be mailed, art cannot include full nudity. Please send submissions (and shout outs to the authors from the first issue mailed in January!) addressed to Black & Pink - HOT PINK. This is a voluntary project, and no money will be offered for submissions, but you might get the chance to share your spicy story with many others! The zine will be sent 1-2 times per year. To subscribe to receive a copy of HOT PINK twice a year, write to our address, Black & Pink -GENERAL.

A MESSAGE FROM JASON

Dear friends,

I hope this note finds you as well as possible. As you notice we are running things a little behind, but appreciate your patience with us. As I write this letter people all over social media and in the news are celebrating the Supreme Court ruling in favor of same-sex marriage. I want to first recognize and honor the joy that many people are experiencing. There are those who have dedicated countless hours to this fight and who feel like this ruling allows them to feel more whole. I also want to recognize those who hare written to Black and Pink looking for advice on how to marry their lovers in prison. I hope that this ruling does provide some relief to you.

To be honest, the Supreme Court ruling is not providing much relief for me. We have shared many things over the years in the newspaper about how same-sex marriage will not secure LGBTQ liberation. I found myself particularly annoyed at Justice Kennedy's closing paragraph in the ruling today. He wrote, "No union is more profound than marriage, for it embodies the highest ideals of love, fidelity, devotion, sacrifice, and family. In forming a marital union, two people become something greater than once they were. As some of the petitioners in these cases demonstrate, marriage embodies a love that may endure even past death... Their hope is not to be condemned to live in loneliness, excluded from one of civilization's oldest institutions. They ask for equal dignity in the eyes of the law. The Constitution grants them that right."

What is it, do you think, that makes marriage the most profound union? What about this state sanctioned relationship do you think holds the highest ideals of love, sacrifice, and family? And why do you think people who are unmarried are somehow condemned to loneliness? Do you agree with Justice Kennedy's assessment of marriage? As I think back to much of the writing we have seen in the Black and Pink newspaper it does not seem as though marriage would end the loneliness and suffering of solitary confinement. It does not seem to me that the union of marriage would somehow improve access to wages and money for LGBTQ prisoners. It does, however, seem to me that we have incredible love, sacrifice, and family amongst our Black and Pink community without the state recognizing the relationships we have created. Through sharing stories, telling our truths, and expressing support for one another we are creating alternatives to the limitations of marriage. Justice Kennedy highlights marriage as one of civilization's oldest institutions as though it's history makes it inherently good, but we know that incarceration and other forms of punishment are also long standing institutions. An institution's long presence in society certainly does not mean we should be jumping on board.

There are those who are saying that now the same-sex marriage fight is (hopefully) over, that now there should be more funding available for other struggles. Do you think think that wealthy white gay men and lesbians are going to start redirecting money into organizing efforts like ours? I am trying to be hopeful and optimistic about that, but I am not so sure. Do you think that the people who are taking to the streets to celebrate the ruling will later go home and write letters to LGBTQ prisoner pen pals? I bet that some are, but in reality it is a very small number. How do you think we can redirect energy to concern for LGBTQ prisoners, who are primarily poor people and people of color? What should Black & Pink be doing to harness some new power? I can tell you that we did just do a fundraiser for people who are watching Orange is the New Black to donate money to an organization for every episode of the show they watch. This "viewer solidarity fund," as we titled it, has generated about \$5,000 spread across a few organizations working with trans/cis women and/ or LGBTQ prisoners. Efforts like this help us get some attention and focus directed towards actual people in

As some people celebrate same-sex marriage, we know that the struggle continues. We know that there are concrete and steel walls that still need to come down. This Pride month we remember our foremothers who threw bottles and high heels at the cops outside the Stonewall Inn on Christopher Street in NYC in 1969. We keep fighting knowing that once there were no

prisons, that day will come again. In loving solidarity, Jason

A DECADE OF BLACK AND PINK

Anyone who is being released between now and September, PLEASE send us your outside contact information. We are planning a big gathering in October 2015 to celebrate 10 years of Black and Pink. We will be having a big party on Friday night and a weekend long conference to plan the next steps for Black and Pink. We will be able to pay for travel, housing, and food of those who attend. We will also offer a stipend of \$150 to formerly incarcerated people who attend.

BLACK AND PINK HOTLINE NUMBER!!!

After over a year of thinking about how to make this happen we are now announcing that people can call us. The phone number is **617.519.4387**. Your calls will be answered as often as possible. We are not currently able to set up accounts, so calls must be either pre-paid or collect. The hotline will be available Sundays 1-5pm (Eastern Time) for certain. You can call at other times as well and we will do our best to answer your calls.

The purpose of the hotline is for 3 primary things:

- 1. Story telling. We are trying to collect stories of incarcerated members to turn into a recording that we can play at our 10 year anniversary celebration in October. Your voices are important to us and we want to make sure they are part of this event. We want to make time to record your story if you give us permission.
- 2. Supportive listening. Being in prison is lonely, as we all know. The hotline is here for supportive listening so you can just talk to someone about what is going on in your life.
- 3. Organizing. If there are things going on at your prison in terms of lock downs, guard harassment, resistance, and anything else that should be shared with the public, let us know so we can spread the word.

Restrictions:

The hotline is not a number to call about getting on the pen pal list or to get the newspaper.

The hotline is not a number to call for sexual or erotic chatting.

The hotline is not a number for getting help with your current court case, we are not legal experts.

We look forward to hearing from you! This is our first attempt at this so please be patient with us as we work it all out. We will not be able to answer every call, but we will do our best.

We are sorry to share that we can only accept prepaid calls at this time. We apologize to anyone who has been trying to get through to the hotline with no success. We are still working this system out. Thank you for being understanding.

RELIGIOUS SUBMISSIONS WANTED

Black and Pink is compiling a zine about prison, faith, and sexuality.

Please submit your neatly written submission of 3 or fewer pages to:

Black and Pink - The Spirit Inside

614 Columbia Road Dorchester MA 02125

Drawings also welcomed.

We would like your help in putting together a zine (miniature magazine) or resource guide about religion and spirituality for and by LGBTQ+ people behind bars. We'd like to request written homily, reflection, teaching, drawing, poem, or other resource for people behind bars.

With your submission about faith and prison or sexuality, please include the name of your religion/faith/spirituality (Example: Christianity, Paganism, Judaism) and your sect or denomination (Example: Baptist, none, Reform)

We welcome anything in your own words, but for space and variety, not all submissions can be accepted. By submitting, you give Black and Pink permission to publish your writing in print and on the Internet.

LETTERS TO OUR FAMILY

Dear B&P Family,

I just finished reading the Oct/Nov issue and felt moved to drop you a few lines. I am inspired each month by our shared struggles expressed by the family members who, though separated from society and each other by bars, fences, and state lines, still manage to unite on common ground.

I found Extein's article, Struggling for Rights, about sex offenders thought provoking. As a one-time LISW (Licensed Independent Social Worker), I ran and co-facilitated clinical psychotherapy groups that dealt in CBT (cognitive behavioral therapy) for sex offenders.

Sex offenders are not all bad people, mostly they are people who have done bad things--according to current laws, societal beliefs, and expectations. Like many gay people, some sex offenders (especially pedophiles) feel and/ or believe that they were born with their attractions. Some will argue that they are a product of their environment, thus created through circumstances. Due to space constraints, I will not delve deeply into these waters.

I only mention these things to offer support for Mr. Extein's argument that not only were we (as LGBT's) once in these very same shoes, there are still many who would condemn us for not only who we are, but what we are. The world is made up of many different kinds of people, many who wish their circumstances were otherwise, and while we do not have to agree with everyone else and their belief systems--we should respect them.

Peace and love to all,

Mack, SC

Black and Pink family,

My name is Matt and I am a 27 year old gay male inmate in the "wonderful" state of Texas. I am writing because the letter from Toy in the Oct/Nov issue inspired me to do so.

First and foremost, Toy, I want to say that I understand what you are going through and can empathize with you on a whole other level than others. I am also incarcerated for a sex offense and have lost all parental rights to my two children. I will indeed keep you and your son in my prayers.

Now to my story. I have always been attracted to the male sex, but was always scared of coming out about it until I came to prison. This is the story of why I finally felt safe to do so. When I came to prison three years ago, I was terrified of what was going to happen to me because of my charge. As I entered this "new world" known as prison I lost all of my family and have not heard from or about my daughter or son. I miss them both so much.

Surprisingly, when I arrived on my assigned unit I was placed in a job where I met the most amazing individual. When I met him I had no idea of his being bi, but we hit it off as brothers and very close friends. Me, him, and another individual that he introduced me to are now very close and can't wait till we can be together in the "free-world."

Amazingly, the only flak we get is not from officers, but from other inmates, such as "Christian brothers." I don't quite understand this, but I do know that the LGBTQ family is strong here on my unit, both in inmates and officers and I pray that it may stay that way.

The two individuals I spoke of earlier are the ones that finally got me to come out of my shell and show the world who I really am. They encourage me daily in many different aspects of my life and I pray daily that I will never lose them.

With much love,

Matt, TX

My Black and Pink Family,

I am new to the Black and Pink Family so allow me to tell you a little bit about myself. My name is Anthony, but people call me Heart Beat. I am a bisexual male from Baltimore city. I am 23 years old, and will be 24 this year. I'm 5'11", 205 pounds, brown skin with a low hair cut.

I knew I was bisexual when I was 13, when a supposed friend was touching me when I was at a sleepover at his house. I never said anything to him or to anybody until now. At that time, I just lay there, enjoying his hands on my private part, acting like I was asleep. To be truthful, I was scared to say anything, but I did like it. At the time I was a gang banger so I couldn't show weakness in the streets.

Then I started to get locked up as a juvenile, and had my first blow job at a juvenile detention center on the Eastern shore. When I grew older and got locked up, as an adult, in a Baltimore city jail is when I met someone I really liked, but he didn't know my feelings. He was my first, and I think about him everyday. Later, we were together at another adult facility and I couldn't say to him what I wanted because I was a part of something, plus his little butt had a boyfriend.

Now I'm in a max 1 prison. I only got 17 years. With 3 years in on it. No one knows who I really am, and to be truthful, I'm scared to come out. I believe if I even tell anyone in my family they're going to disown me. It don't feel like I even have a family because they don't do anything for me anyway.

But anyway, Black and Pink thanks for letting me in your family because I really need one. I feel like no one cares or loves me and I'm a really nice looking, okay, strong guy. I want to say hello to my new brothers and sisters. Love you.

Heart Beat, MD

Dear Black and Pink,

What up Fam! Heyyyy dis is Juicy, Ms Juicy aka, you can't handle the truth. I'm a Sexy Native Queen.

Well, I've been getting the newspaper for a few years now! and I pass it around to all the (LGBTQ) fam here in Ely. A lot of inmates try to hit me up on the low to get me to live with them due to my sexy juicylicious body and swag. But I do not put myself out there like that. I get with who I want, and anyone who I feel is deserving of my company. I conduct myself very respectful and loyal to all my (LGBTQ).

A lot of my homeboys don't know about my juicy ways yet. But since I've come out 5 years ago I do tell all my closest bros. So far they've all said we got your back and accept me as a two spirit. I read about all our bros and sisters struggles and victories and that gives me a sense of comfort in here. I lost contact of my girl Delicious, she's a two spirit as well. She don't know that once she left home I became a girl too. She taught me very well and really helped me find myself as a girl, and now I do my best to help and better any LGBTQ that I meet. I don't care what others think of me b-cuz I am who I am, and creator made me the way I am, I'm hell of sexlicious with my long redish hair. I will not stop Rep'n our family to all my (LGBTQ) Be part of who god made you.

Pray and don't be selfish. You must play your part in our struggles. If you give someone one arrow, he can break it with one motion over his knee. But give him 10 arrows to break, It'll be impossible.

"Unity"
Much love to yal all.
Your native girl,
Ms. Juicy, NV

I would like to bring to everyone's attention, the life endangerment, abuse and torture, I as a senior prisoner, am receiving and enduring at this extremely corrupt and illegal family operated at an Alaskan correctional facility. I have been sexually assaulted/abused, by inappropriate touching of my genitals, and an unauthorized illegal cavity search of my opening by digital penetration, by a sexual pervert female, an AK. D.O.C. employee, which of course has been corruptly and illegally justified.

I have had my legal filings and other legal documents stolen (4) four different times, and numerous pieces of artwork worth several thousand dollars stolen at the hands of the wife/spouse of the assistant superintendent, which of course is a fault of mine, however that can be. She was removed from the hobby shop and placed in a higher paying position in probations, for lying, cheating and stealing. This is called progress, and is the norm at this corrupt and illegal family operated facility, and these actions justify putting me in a life endangerment position, where my life could be taken at any minute for no reason, by AK. D.O.C., supervisor and so-called staff, and selected prisoners that will later be rewarded for their actions.

I will not be the first to lose their life at this facility by the use of this manner and tactics. To all of our Black and Pink Family, take care, stay strong, and don't give up. Because one battle is lost does not mean we or anyone has lost the war on prisoner abuse, harassment and torture.

Love to all, always,

Earl, AK

Dear Black and Pink Family;

This is your Wiccan brother Matt from Oklahoma once again; merry meet to each and everyone of you who is maintaining life day to day while in prison. April is a very difficult month for me due to the amount of birthdays of friends and family members on the outside in the free world. Instead of feeling sorry for myself I figured I'd write in to get it all out, and to recognize a couple of people who wrote in for the March issue.

To my deceased father, who passed away from this earthly plane almost 8 years ago, your birthday fell on April 15th and it was a sad day for me just as it has been every year since your passing. I miss you more and more as the years go by, and there are many days I really miss the talks we used to have. You always knew what to say to lift my spirits, forever reminding me that there is always hope for the future and to never let go of my trust in God. Happy Birthday Daddy! I miss you so much.

To my mother who will be 75 years young on the 23rd of April. Thank you for all of the toughness you instilled in me over the years. Thank you for always teaching me how to dig deep within myself to find that inner strength that lies within, that I figure was no longer there; ah, but there it is! Thank you for showing me that age and growing older is all a mindset and what I make of it. Most of all, thank you for your unconditional love throughout my (almost) 45 years of life; whenever the dust has settled and everyone else has given up on me you've been there to help me to keep going. Happy 75th birthday Momma!

To Westley (aka Paris) in Michigan. I admire you for your toughness and your strength through what you have endured. I was also sexually assaulted by a cellmate in 2002, so I know exactly what you are going through. I wish there were more than just mere words that I could tell you to reach out and comfort you. While some people may say that "Time heals all wounds," that is no comfort to someone like you (or myself) who has endured sexual assault. All I can tell you is, you are not alone like you feel you are! You do have a friend here in Oklahoma who cares and understands what you are going through. You've got the heart and spirit of a lion! Let that inner strength and drive help you keep going, you've got A LOT more of it than most people I've met in my 27 years of being out of the closet. Blessed be my friend!

LETTERS TO OUR FAMILY CONTINUED

...Continued on Page 3...To Maximus E in Ohio. Thank you for enlightening me about your background and history. When I was 30 years old I met someone like yourself (a diaper boy), but I did not give much thought or acknowledgement to who he really was on the inside. Your article/letter enlightened me on the fact that people such as yourself are just as much a part of our LGBT Community as the rest of us; nobody has the right to pass judgement on you be it prison officials, or, more importantly, other LGBT members. I also suffer from PTSD due to sexual assault and physical assault from over a decade ago. Stay strong Max and know that you have touched at least one person's life; mine! You are by no means weak for being who you are, after reading your letter you are probably one of the bravest people I've met. You also have a friend here in Oklahoma... Blessed be Max!

To the rest of my Black & Pink family, let me depart with these words of wisdom: Analyze closely your own actions, learn to discriminate between what is true and what is false, exercise resolutely your intelligence in all matters that you do, or that come to your hands!

Blessed be, Matt, OK

Hello Family!

This is Gizmo again from PA. My article was printed in July 2014 in Black and Pink. A LOT has happened since I wrote that article.

First of all, I found out that I do not have HIV! The prison, where the test was done, made a mistake! Either that or a damned good miracle has occurred! Either way, I'm so grateful I am not HIV positive, but my heart goes out to those who have HIV and AIDS.

Even so, I am in a very dark place right now- the Restrictive Housing Unit (RHU) in Pennsylvania. Every State inmate in Pennsylvania enters this prison at one time in their sentence - the RHU is the worst in the state. My cell is infested with cockroaches and mice no matter how clean I keep it. The CO's treat me like shit. My cell is VERY tiny I look forward to go to my home jail. Someone wrote this inspiring graffiti on the desk in my cell that says "Hard Times Don't Last!" My family, we as LGBTQ inmates, we have it hard in prison, but remember that hard times don't last. Good times are ahead. We need to stick together now more than ever! There is a saying that I learned in Rehab once, and I think it can apply to the LGBTQ community - "As long as the ties that bind us together are stronger than those that would tear us apart, ALL WILL BE WELL!" Brothers and sisters, WE ARE FAMILY! We need to stick together no matter WHAT!

Family, I love you all, don't forget that! Every single one of you is loved! Peace out!

Love always, Tom AKA Gizmo, PA

Greetings & Salutations to all my B&P Family!

My name is Diamond & I am a 34 y/o Gay Black Male, currently serving a 4 to 10 year sentence for robbery. After being down for 3 years and 1 month, I have only 11 months remaining before I go to my Parole Hearing. So I ask all of you to pray for my strength in completing the duration of my sentence.

The reason why I am reaching out to all of you is to inform you of what happened to me recently. After working for 2 weeks in Culinary, I was told by my unit's coworker that because of a "medical restriction" I will be unassigned from my position in the kitchen. Now, for those of you who don't understand what that means; it means that because I am HIV Positive, I cannot work in the kitchen, When I got the news that I was fired because of my health status, I was appalled to say the least because when I went to Classifications for the job, the Prison Administrators knew I was HIV Positive before they hired me.

I'm not really sure how to feel about all of this because I don't know if my rights were violated or if I was discriminated against, but all of this screams "unconstitutional" to me.

I live in Las Vegas where people living with HIV handle food all the time on their jobs, so why is it so different in Prison? If in fact the Prison Administrators didn't want me to handle the food, they could have easily placed me in another position like Pots and Pans or cleaning trays in the Clipper Room versus taking away my job entirely.

This is emotionally and mentally disturbing because I've never experienced anything like this before and I never thought I would have to.

I am so grateful to have a partner/lover who knows my status, accepts me as I am, and always does his best to support every decision I make. He is helping me go through the Grievance Process at this time because something needs to be done. Thank you J. I love you more than you will ever know.

I ask all of you to keep me in your prayers and if you know anything that can help me legally please let me know. In the meantime I will do my best to keep everyone in the loop.

To all my brothers and sisters living with HIV and AIDS, you are not alone nor forgotten. We are one step closer to our cure.

In Love and Solidarity, Diamond, NV

"See The Beauty in Your Freedom"

Being in prison is not easy for anyone. But being a transgender in prison is even tougher. There are very few of us transwomen and we are discriminated against more so than the other inmates.

For the most part it is a mental game. To still be called gay, fag, queer, homosexual, sir or man is disgusting. It goes against everything I believe in about who I am. This is not just by inmates, but staff as well. We are not given good jobs. We are totally looked down upon just because of our gender identity. That being said, I have taken the responsibility upon myself to be a voice for those who let themselves be silenced. I believe that no matter where I am or who I am, I have the right to be heard as an equal.

To be bullied, raped or suffer constant mental anguish is not healthy. Because I have been a victim of those things in my life, doesn't mean I will allow it to make me hide in a corner. Being transgender in prison or the free world, you have to allow yourself to be free of negative, hateful, and angry people. I say to those people, I won't be bullied into silence for who I am.

To all my sisters who feel like giving up. We live in a beautiful world. Allow yourself to see the beauty in your freedom.

Risa, CA

My name is Ms. Phoebe, and you might remember an article that I wrote back in March 2013, or maybe you read my article I wrote in "Hidden Expressions" Vol 2, called "I was born this way baby".

Anyway I've come to you this day, to report a victory and also some news. On the downside first let's start with the victory after so many losses and letdowns with the courts, on March 20th, 2015, I had a medical visit from a Dr. Cooper, from Oklahoma City, who came to see me personally and to tell me that he had good news for me. Now this Dr. Cooper is the new chief medical director over all of O.D.O.C. and he told me that he wrote a new policy that states that anyone with a diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder (GID) will be able to start hormone therapy and be able to receive female undergarments. He is still working on getting our makeup approved and getting them to purchase a "no!no! Pro" for our hair removal. He is also trying to get them to let us live our "real life experience" as women right here in a men's facility, so things are starting to get better on that front.

However, on the flip side of that coin I'm still having trouble with my unit manager who wrote me up twice in one day, just because he hates transsexuals. He wrote me up for: 1) Wearing make up, and 2) Because he says that he called my name, and I didn't hear him call my name. I'm still fighting those write-up's. The ACLU sent me the preaching standards and in it, it says that Transgender woman should be allowed to have the ability to buy from canteen the same items that women in women's facility are allowed to buy and have. So that is something else that I am fighting for.

So by the time that this gets printed in Black and Pink , for all of you transsexual, transgressed or gender nonconforming people in O.D.O.C, if you have been diagnosed with GID fill out your medical request to start receiving your hormones. If you haven't been diagnosed yet, file with mental health to get your (GID) diagnosis and then file for your hormones. This is a win for the Transgender Community.

I want to give a shout out to the other Transgender women who inspired me to write this piece, I want to thank you Susie Lynn Moon (PA), Jakee Lynn (NY), Lisa (CA), Alissa (CA), Fatima Shayla Pearl (CA), Jamie Annie (MI), Lady-Loierisa (CA), and even for a gay brother Antonio (AZ). Thanks to all of you, you mean a lot to me, so stay strong and keep fighting the good fight! I Love all of my sisters and brothers, blessed be!

Love always, Xoxoxoxo Ms.Phoebe, OK

Dear Black and Pink,

Hey, hey to all my LGBT family! How is everyone out there in the prison system doing? I pray all of you are hanging in there and keeping your heads held high. Remember don't let them break you. Stay strong.

Well I'm writing to the newspaper to remember a fallen LGBT family member. Roughly a month and a half ago at the county jail I'm in, an inmate who was gay known as Pat took his own life. You know, being gay myself too, hearing about anyone taking their life is sad, but when someone who's LGBT takes their life, it hurts a little more.

I've been in prison now eight and a half years, and I've been at this county jail for 2 months and I've heard of many inmates dying, but this is my first time hearing about a gay inmate dying. I didn't know Pat at all but I wish I had because I would have tried to talk to him and to be a friend.

Today I spoke to a female correctional officer about Pat and just hearing about the things he dealt with and the harassment he suffered just brings tears to my eyes. When I was in a different prison before this jail, I used to get harassed 24/7 by other prisoners and by correctional officers and when I fought back it just got worse. When I got here, a few inmates harassed me but I have had to put on a facade so other inmates won't harass me or bully me. On a daily basis I walk around like I'm some gangster thug when in truth I am so girly and feminine. Anyways in closing this letter I ask all my LGBT family members to keep Pat in their hearts and prayers, please.

Thank you, Yasin AKA Mikala, VT

LETTERS TO OUR FAMILY CONTINUED

Dear Black and Pink family + friends

I have been receiving your newsletters for several months now and many of the stories/letters in them are very heartwarming. I have written once before but never had luck to have the letter printed.

Anyways, I am writing today because I want to tell my story and the battle that, even today, at the age of 39 I am continuing to fight. Also, I am writing requesting help and support, because each day it gets harder and harder to think positive and to drive forward through all these battles.

Let me begin by saying to wizkid, "you are definitely not alone!" Almost everything you wrote I could relate to. Now, I never had a crush on any of the Brady Boys, but for me, I always dreamt that I was one of the Brady Girls. I always wanted to spend time with my best friend and we would run around nude or camp-out/sleep over each others house and we would "play around" and I would always want to play the female role.

All this began years earlier, when I was six my father began to molest, rape, and cross-dress me until I took a stand when I was twelve years old. Those actions stopped after a brutal situation, but the damage was done. The years of assault hurt me physically as well as mentally, but I say this to everyone out there who cares to listen: "Some people may try to say the reason why I am so screwed up is because of my father. The truth is I always knew in my heart that I was supposed to be a woman." When my father assaulted me, or when I was alone with my best friend, I knew that I was the female, I knew my role.

Thirty years went by before I could ever find the strength to tell my family about these events. To answer the questions that always remained unanswered, and to finally tell them who I actually want to be. Now three years have gone by and my family has distanced themselves from me. They tell me that "This is my choice!" No, this is a nightmare that I live everyday. It is more a nightmare now than prior to coming into prison because, at least then, I could dress the way I truly felt and hide in the male costume when others were around. I only had a few people who knew I cross-dressed, but no one knew about the assaults though they did know about who I truly wanted to be.

Now today, I sit here all alone, not being able to trust anyone, hiding in this male costume that I despise so much, and living in fear that someone might find out about my true self and attempt to get some (as has happened twice so far since 2012). With that being said, I want to close this letter with a plea for help and guidance. I don't know what to do, nor where to turn to anymore. I trust no one and I hide deep in the male costume because I don't want to be raped again and the FBOP does everything they can do to cover these assaults up. I know first hand! My depression is high and my thought of ending this nightmare gets more and more serious everyday. Please, I need help with learning to cope/deal with all this.

Love Always McKayla, IL

Dear Black & Pink

My name is Scott and I'm a 43 yr old Gay man locked up in a Pennsylvania Prison. And I've gotta say this is one of the worst camps that I have been in, especially if you are LGBTQ.

We endure a lot of hate and discrimination from inmates along with some staff. Since I've been here (March 2013) I've had to deal with sexual harassment, to losing my parole and receiving a "Hit from the PA Parole Board because one of my celly's thought he could have his way with me, because I am gay. We ended up fist fighting and ended up in solitary. I gave security a 3 page statement, called the "PREA" hotline, and filed grievances begging to be single celled. That was a joke. Nothing was done. I've contacted attorneys because they violated some of my constitutional amendments, rights and so on! However, no-one will fight the state.

So now I would just like to say thank you for your Newsletter and everyone that sends letters, poems, and all the support that we all show for one another. I really enjoy and look forward to receiving each monthly issue! To all my brother's and sister's keep your head held high and remember that United We Stand Strong.

Love Ya'll, Scott, PA

Dear Black and Pink Family,

Hello everyone! I hope everyone is in the best of health and spirit in their current situations.

I'm writing to you my family to give an update. On January 2nd, 2015, I filed a Grievance here at a Pennsylvania Department of Corrections facility because they denied me and my fiance the right to get married stating the D.O.C didn't have a "same-sex" marriage policy.

On April 7th, 2015, the chief Grievance coordinator ruled on my final Appeal and has made the decision to remand the Grievance back to the prison to review and make a different response or decision.

My fiance and I are battling this to the end. Yes, it's been 4 months since we were denied but slowly there is progress.

I want to thank everyone who writes the rest of the family. It does help inspire my fiance and I to keep fighting. We want all the couples in our family to be able to get Married no Matter if it's a "Same-Sex" marriage.

It may take time but don't ever give up! Well family please keep strong!

With much love,

Your Brother,

Love Always, PA

I just heard Katy Perry's "Firework" and got the courage to write my first letter. So, hello, hehe. I'm a bi-male, 23 years old. I go by the name of JJ, but to my family I would like to be called Wolf. I'm a bit nervous. I would like to share two stories.

My first is when I came out of the closet a decade ago. Well, sad to say, but it was bad. I faced a lot of violence: verbal, mental, and physical. I got beaten-up just for being me: I used to wear make-up and carried a purse for half my eighth-grade year. I was tormented in the locker rooms, at lunch, and even at home by my own sister, who is now engaged to a girl.

I started cutting myself and trying to commit suicide. I was very depressed to the point where I didn't want to go through the pain anymore. I nearly died if it wasn't, thanks to, for a friend. In the end I got through it. That was a decade ago. Now, I'm still open, and it's gotten better since I became an adult. But not the best.

My second story is recent. I'm locked up in MA waiting to be sentenced to go to a prison. My story happened 4 days ago (April 21st, 2015). Three other inmates including myself were locked-in pending a PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) investigation. Another inmate dropped a note saying the 4 of us were having sexual intercourse. It was straight up B.S. We were locked-in for 2 days and let go due to lack of evidence.

The point of my stories is that no matter what age you are, or where you are, people are going to do anything and everything negative to hurt you, or get you in trouble just because you are different. People, these days we need to grow-up. It's 2015, gays are getting their rights, so GET OVER IT!!!!

If any of my Brothers or Sisters are, or did experience what I've been through, just know that they're jealous or scared to be who they really are.

You are a BEAUTIFUL person. Don't let anyone ever put you down. Be stronger than them.

My Brothers and Sisters, stand together. Those who are alone, just know that I'm praying for you to be strong and to get over this.

MUCH LOVE TO THE FAMILY! Wolf-arooooo!!!!!! XOXOXOXO

JJ, MA

Dear Black and Pink family:

I would like to first acknowledge the love and support I have received from the Black & Pink Family and the community that endorses our movement for civil rights and freedom. I want to thank everyone involved who has recognized the injustices being generously distributed upon our brothers and sisters in the LGBTQ family, who are incarcerated in federal and state prisons, and are taking initiative to fight alongside of us to stop the horrific treatments of violence, discrimination, ostracizing, and numerous other forms of oppression being enacted upon us.

I deeply appreciate the legal advocacy that is being done to create the necessary changes that promote the abolishment of prisons - or in the least - offer our LGBTQ family some protection and/or resources that can be utilized to challenge the illegal acts being done by our abusive jail custodians.

I recently read a published letter in the July 2014, Black & Pink Newspaper, by a person from Kansas, signed, "Legalize Freedom!" The letter makes mention of Kansas offenders having to register as either "violent offenders" or "Sex offenders" and must pay \$25.00 every three months to remain free, which is the only portion of that letter that I am commenting on. New York State has a law that makes a paroled prisoner pay a \$30.00 fee, once each month, for the entire duration of their stay on parole supervision. It doesn't matter what your crime is, if you fail to pay the monthly fee, you will become subject to an immediate parole violation and placed back into prison, and a penalty of time and/or restitution will be lodged against you! Now that is, what I term as, paying to have the hard earned liberties of freedom, this penalty is imposed along with extensive other conditions of parole that each ex-con must agree to and abide by!

Also in New York State's prison system, the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) has an unwritten provision to deny all transgender prisoners the benefits of participating in a work release program that heterosexual inmates get to enjoy. I was personally targeted on this matter, and I have it in writing with the prison Superintendent's signature granting me a transfer to a work release program because I am scheduled to become paroled on October 10, 2014. I was hoping to obtain employment to earn some money to pay for an apartment and some clothing after serving 20 years for the crime of attempted burglary in the second degree, which is a class D Felony, for which I was sentenced as a discretionary, non-violent felony offender (three strikes law). However, now I have no family or friends to help me in transitioning back into society and having been denied the work release program, they have enabled me to not be successful. I arrived at the work release program, only to be informed that this is an all dormitory setting, and that there are no provisions or privacy of single person rooms that would allow me to be placed into the program. The discrimination here is so thick that it could be cut with a knife.

I really am concerned about the necessary financial aid that will enable me to obtain an apartment and clothing, which I will surely need for my employment search. This is horrible that I have served twenty years for a crime that I am totally innocent of -- only to learn that the DOCCS has no intentions of providing me with any opportunity to secure savings, which will allow me to purchase an apartment, so I do not have to remain living in a homeless shelter. On top of this, I am expected to pay my parole officer \$30.00 per month just so I can remain in society on parole supervision. I just do not see how this is possible, for me, to accomplish when it's evident that the DOCCS has

Continued on Page 5...

LETTERS TO OUR FAMILY CONTINUED

... Continued on Page 5...nothing available for me to participate in their work release program, which is enjoyed by the heterosexual prisoners. I do not wish to become one of the statistics that falls into the Department's revolving door syndrome of recidivism, even though we all know that the department encourages this type of thing to ensure that it has jobs for its employees.

Therefore, I am reaching out to the LGBTQ family and I am asking for any help that you are able to offer that will assist me with transitioning back into society. Transgender women in New York State prisons are heavily discriminated against by the Department. We are treated like a big joke and this is due to the ignorance of staff and hostile, homo bashing prisoners that transgender prisoners are forced to live with. I am the only transgender in this prison and have been the only transgender in the last several prisons that I have been housed within, during these past 20 years.

I respectfully request any assistance that the Black & Pink family and our supporters are able to provide. Thank you so much for helping a sister in dire need.

Sincerely yours, Veronica, NY

POETRY FROM THE HEART

MAMA'S HUG

I've been looking at the bars all around my soul wondering, "how'd I get in here?"

I have a few things locked up with me, my memories and tears.

I think about the days I never had, I think of what I had some days; of the caring things people said to me and of the vulgar things I'd say.

I had Family who looked up to me, I had a lover who I made cry; I'm looking at all the shattered dreams I see through teardrops in my eyes.

I get letters from my mama, I see the stains from fallen tears; I remember in my younger days, When I hurt, how she'd hold me near.

My Daddy's upset and won't talk to me, He won't visit me behind these walls; "If I want to go to prison son," he said, "I'll just break the law."

It's been 20 years and my kids are grown, I got divorce papers from my wife; Mama still sends her faded teardrops, Daddy didn't visit me his whole life

I've spent a little time with the man above, We've been talking for many years; He put a little peace inside of me, He's been walking me in here.

I've had lot's of pain inside of me, I'm getting old and I've been ill; But I know God, he walks with me, He sends blessings to me still.

A grand-daughter came to visit me, She brought her 2 sons along; the only visit in 400 years, It was like the sweetest song.

I carry some new memories, I have blessings to carry on; I had lots of pain god took away, but there's one that still ain't gone.

I still have the letters mama sent to me, And the one before she died; She said she was writing a hug to me... I see the drops that she had cried.

End

Jeff aka Zeva, TX

POETRY FROM THE HEART

IN TRANSITION

They didn't know my name or really care. My shoes, my pants, the way I do my hair.

Each say something they never have to ask. What isn't said could be no simple task.

On every entry I would catch a glance, but all the interactions risk the chance of being seen as more or less a thing to those who only want the stuff I bring.

Their eyes are heavy weight that stare me down; they hold, and hold.

And hold what holds to drown the pain until I am the thing they want with the pony-tails.

I'll be their phony "cunt".

It shouldn't matter very much by now but it will, knowing just how much, right now, you've hurt this, me, the thing you call by name but never kiss.

How could I ask or blame?
To you, I'm pants and hair that hides my face.
For you, I paint and shave, or change my voice.
To me, I'm scared and nervous, filled with fear because I barely knew the stupid mirror.

I didn't know his name, or really care. Her shoes, her pants, the way we do her hair.

John, NV

IF THEY HAD THEIR WAY

If they had their way they'd kill us all Then spray-paint "we hate gay people" on the wall If they had their way we'd all be dead They'd burn our bodies alive then cut off our heads If they had their way we wouldn't exist now They teach each other hate crimes and show their children how If they had their way Queens would be history They'd solve their hate for us and this ain't no mystery If they had their way Christians and Muslims alike Would throw to the lions all faggots and dykes If they had their way we'd be thrown from a plane Without a parachute and splatter all our brains If they had their way we'd be a thing of the past Cause they can't stand to see us give up our ass If they had their way gays lesbians, bis, and trans wouldn't be We'd be hung at the gallows for all str-8's to see If they had their way we'd be shot one by one Until it ain't no more sisterhood, they'd leave none If they had their way it wouldn't be gay marriage We'd be exiled to the wilderness and forced to live savage So don't be like them it defeats our purpose in life Stay on top and see the surface of what is right We are different and yet we're all the same We dance to "our" tune let's not play "their" games We doing our own thang we got to love one another Christians, str-8s, and Muslims wanna see us hate each other That's how they are, that's all on them When we as GLBT do hatred we're no better off than them If they had they way. Aren't you glad they don't? =)...

Chelsy, WI

POETRY FROM THE HEART CONTINUED

MY LOVE IS YOUR LOVE

My love for you is unusual, it's truly hard to explain. My love is like the bloom of a rose when it's first touched by rain.

Your love is a sense of security that gives me the strength to hold on, your love is the comfort that I need when all else seems gone.

My love is pure like the beauty of snow, my love is yours so never let it go.

You are uncomparable, your love is very unique. When I search for special love your love is what I seek.

Your love is my support, your love is my inspiration, your love is my guidance throughout any situation.

Your love has the power to chase my feelings of fear away, your love is the sunshine that brightens my day.

My love is for you till death do us part. My love is so true because it comes from the heart.

Our love is truly meant to be, so now my love is your love and your love is mine.

Lorenzo, OH

BLACK QUEEN

When I think of all the times when my mother did all she could to put food on the table, I see one thing, Black Queen!

When a woman can go through being on drugs, getting beat by a cold hearted man and still be strong, Black Queen!

To work 3 jobs, cook, clean and take care of 5 kids with no father, and still fight hard times, what I see, Black Queen!

For you to go through the hard times, ups and downs to the very end I love you; for that you are Black Queen!

Dedicated to my Loving Mother Ellen, LA

18 LINES OF ACTIVISM

Jerry in Kansas, your rhymes are candid and mathematic The Prison Industrial Complex is not lacking in talent Detainees with prose, poetry is anything that enlightens the mind Love is poetic but justice is blind

Activists are a dying breed
I look at the walls, bars and draconian laws,
And I scream, "I can't Breathe!"
I think I have the potential to be a god
As long as I believe in myself
Then I can never be an atheist
I'm a Humanist...
My heartbeat is where the music is
Freedom is vital for evolution of our species
Reason is vital for revolution in our streets
Dream of a better way, apply wisdom to gray matter
Be inspired through the lyrics
Like the Stanford Prison Experiment
They couldn't stand this experiment

Travis, IO

THOSE TRULY POOR

[Poem from my poetry book]

I remember sleeping on the streets panhandling and hustling for 12 straight seasons. Eating in a lot of nice soup kitchens, I enjoyed being homeless and had my reasons. Some people were kind and some were mean, and others would turn the other way. No matter if it was rain or winter cold, Nothing could deter my bright sunny day. I used to dumpster dive for food, in Waterbury where there was a KFC. After stealing sodas from the seven-eleven, it was as if those still hot chickens were specially for me. They kept them within a doubled-up garbage bag, and there was at least well over 5 pounds of food. Afterwards we'd be so full, and drink some Steel Reserve to put us in the mood. I remember being homeless in Norristown, Pennsylvania, McDonald's always looked out for me. They gave me a bag full of burgers and a bag full of fries, telling me to be safe and enjoy the sodas and food for free. The drop-in centers were my number one hangout, because there were always a lot of beautiful sistahs there. A place where nobody judged you. A place where everyone honestly cared. If I had a chance I'd definitely do it all over again, because that's how I learned everything and more.

Justin aka Chimera, PA

MY EMO PUPPY; MY BEST FRIEND

this is my heart going out to all of those truly poor.

This poem I dedicate to all who struggle,

Everyday I wake up, I see your face not shining beyond the starlit night.

You have no rest, I have no rest.

What can I do, be there for you side-to-side with all the medical help and Joy I can help you with.

When you are down, I'm down with depression to the point it hurts me to see a starlit puppy like you hurting with these conditions.

Each time I stare in your starlit eyes, I'm filled with "Love, Joy, Happiness," connected, amazed at who you really are, always calm around you, to the state of my mind that I want to hold on to this emo puppy that shines beyond the night through the flaming night.

I will not rest or I will not give up on you for support on your medical problem ... I will make you happy through the moonlit night till the next happy moon lit bright.

Scott, WA

TRANSGENDER POWER

I awoke in the night
With Transgender power in my veins
As thunder rattled the world outside
My Window
And to the clatter of falling clouds,
I wondered, with my power,

How it would feel
To Shake the Stars.

Deven, AZ



STRUGGLING FOR RIGHTS

BLACK AND PINK, UNITED FOR JUSTICE!

By: Revolutionary trans activist justin adkins & Revolutionary Socialist Keith 'Comrade Malik' Washington (Deputy Chairman New Afrikan Black Panther Party - Texas Prison Chapter)

Malik's side of the equation:

Revolutionary greetings family!

More often than not Jason Lydon of Black and Pink drops golden nuggets of knowledge and history as they relate to the Black Liberation Movement and the Gay Pride - Gay Power Movement of the 70's and 80's. Many people forget that there has been a strong solidarity between people of color and the LGBTQ community for decades!

Sisters and Brothers we are seeing a growing number of black males and trans people of color murdered by police on Amerika's streets. It is pretty clear that both of our communities are plagued by structural violence and discrimination that is emanating from a capitalist/imperialist ruling class which controls the ultra-fascist and brutal police. It was Black and Pink's anti-imperialist philosophy that attracted me from the very beginning. I asked myself, "Could I join these radical queer people in the protracted struggle against racism, oppression, and imperialism?" The answer was YES!! "Can we abolish the Prison Industrial Complex?" ¡Si, Se Puede! / Yes, We Can!

In 2012 I submitted a pen-pal application. I officially joined the Black and Pink family and hoped for a response. Around June 2014 I received a letter from a transgender guy named justin adkins. He said that we had some similar opinions on social justice and other issues that affect our communities and he said he'd like to correspond with me. Well this was the beginning of one of the most productive relationships I've ever had with a "free world" activist, outside of the relationship I have with my mentor and friend Professor Victor Wallis.

justin has taken my "voice" and amplified it to the point where the "prison-crats" who operate slave camps and gulags respect "Comrade Malik"! When I explained to justin that prison guards were murdering Texas prisoners in adseg and solitary confinement he helped start an online campaign, #PleaseStop-TheKilling But this campaign has been growing and its not just about Texas anymore. justin helped me post articles on Huffington Post which shed light on the abuse of elderly and disabled prisoners in Texas.

justin helped me enter the realm of social media by adminitrating my facebook page, https://www.facebook.com/comrademalikwashington. justin surpassed and exceeded any expectations I had in seeking a pen-pal from Black and Pink!

A revolutionary trans activist who works at a college joining forces with me? A low-income bi-racial black male locked up in a Texas Prison! Why me? I'll let justin answer that, but before I turn the pen over to him let's talk politics briefly.

I said earlier this year on a video message distributed with justin's help that every disease that plagues humyn beings today springs from the branches of the tree that is imperialism. Global warming and climate change hits as in the face and few media outlets draw the connection to imperialist multinational oil and gas corporations that continue to destroy "mother earth". We see the turmoil on the middle east and few realize the US foreign policy and military agenda is crafted by money hungry capitalist pigs!

And, last but not least - the wholesale murder of black males/females and other people of color in Amerika! Do the oppressors really believe this pattern of genocide can continue? Do they think a vanguard of revolutionary minded humyn beings won't arise out of the brutalized and oppressed masses?

I'll end my portion with a quote from my friend and mentor Professor Victor Wallis PHd Berklee College - Boston, MA. "Solidarity in its fullest expression transcends boundaries of occupation and locality, of culture, race, gender, and nation. At whatever level it is felt, solidarity is what strengthens each of us to take risks when doing so becomes necessary to the pursuit of our collective goal. Insofar as it fortifies us all to face down those risks, it also provides a kind of back-up to each of us, at once reducing our individual vulnerability and increasing the likelihood of our joint success."

Sisters and brothers, there is no room for patriarchy, male chauvinism, homophobia, classism, or under-cover assimilation! Black and Pink must unite for justice. All Power to the People!

justin's side of the equation:

I used to have a pen-pal, an amazing trans woman who I lost contact with over the years. She was moved and I was horrible at responding in a timely manner. My friendship with her was one I will never forget though. We came from different places in life but we connected around some shared experiences of living life as genders that we didn't connect with.

Prison abolition has been an issue I have cared about and been speaking about for sometime. After I experienced a brief arrest at Occupy Wall Street in 2011 I realized that I needed to step up my game on work around abolishing the prison industrial complex. I live in a rural community and so my organizing looks a bit different. I have work I am able to do locally but with most "action" happening in urban environments I figured starting to have a pen-pal again was a great next step for me.

I wanted to connect with someone who cared about organizing for social justice, who was actively fighting the system that oppresses us all. When I first wrote Comrade Malik I was clear about what kind of relationship I was looking for and I was so honored when he first wrote me back.

The relationship that Malik and I have is truly one of mutual aid. We have started writing together and getting the word out that while we experience oppression in different ways, the system which oppresses us is the same.

Malik has introduced me to other activists who he works with. Because of my friendship and work with Malik, I now have friends and contacts around the world who are in the struggle together. This network grew when Comrade Malik asked me to help him launch the #PleaseStopTheKilling campaign and his facebook page. The facebook page gets the word out about abuses happening around the world. Malik sends me info to post and tells me the types of topics that are on his mind. I find the resources and post them. Sometimes he sends me info about music he is thinking about, or that has an important message, and I post the audio, or music videos. The facebook page has become a hub for folks he writes and connects with.

When Malik was in solitary earlier this year, because of bogus charges which were eventually dropped, we were able to get the word out to his support network quickly. When guards and the overseers of these gulags (Malik really introduced me to using this term 'gulag' to describe the US PIC. It is rather appropriate and describes the experiences I hear from Malik and the 2 other pen-pals I have developed friendships with) anyway, I was saying... When guards and the overseers of these gulags know that people have outside support it makes a difference.

We are both excited to share our friendship with the rest of the Black and Pink community because it is a great example of people reaching across what appear to be differences to work together. It is also a great example of how your pen-pal experience can go beyond shallow conversation about the weather. While sharing about daily life is important you can also organize and work together to make the world a better place for everyone. People living inside the confines of prison can effect change outside the prison walls and those of us living on the outside can work with our comrades on the inside to effect change there as well. Doing this work together makes a huge difference!

The final thing I would like to express is a quote from the revolutionary Assata Shakur, who has been a great influence on both me and my comrade Malik. Many of us have heard and invoked this message before but I challenge you to really let her words sink in. Assata is talking specifically about the work within the african diaspora but this message reaches beyond and addresses physical chains and the chains of oppression, imperialism, racism, transphobia, homophobia, patriarchy, etc.

"It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win. We must love each other and support each other. We have nothing to lose but our chains."

— Assata Shakur

Malik wanted me to share some of our joint writings. They can be found here:

- https://www.facebook.com/comrademalikwashington
- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/justin-adkins/please-stop-the-killing b 6538064.html
- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/justin-adkins/beatings-and-abuse-of-theprison b 6689750.html
- https://twitter.com/search?q=%23pleasestopthekilling

STRUGGLING FOR RIGHTS CONTINUED

LADIES IN THE STREETS:
BEFORE STONEWALL, TRANSGENDER UPRISING CHANGED
LIVES

By Nicole Pasulka orignally published on NPR, May 5th, 2015

It was after the bars had closed and well into the pre-dawn hours of an August morning in 1966 when San Francisco cops were in Gene Compton's cafeteria again. They were arresting drag queens, trans women and gay hustlers who had been sitting for hours, eating and gossiping and coming down from their highs with the help of 60-cent cups of coffee.

The 24-hour eatery was a local favorite. It was centrally located — adjacent to the hair salon, the corner bar and the bathhouse — and pro-



vided a A view of Gene Compton's cafeteria In San Francisco's Tenderloin Diswell-lit and trict. In 1966, the eatery was the site of landmark confrontations between comfortable police and transgender activists.

haven for trans women performing in clubs or walking the streets in San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood.

From Compton's "you could walk to Woolworth's to buy [fake] eyelashes, and it was two blocks from the airline bus terminal," where Tamara Ching says many drag queens and trans women would go to change from male to female clothes. Ching is an Asian-American transgender woman who grew up in San Francisco. She frequented the Tenderloin during the 1960s and has lived there since 1992. "Everybody that lived in the Tenderloin ate at Compton's," Amanda St. Jaymes, a transgender woman who ran a residential hotel nearby, said in a documentary, Screaming Queens, which chronicles a confrontation with police that marked the start of a movement toward LGBT rights.

Compton's management didn't want the cafeteria to be a popular late-night hangout for drag queens, trans women and hustlers. Workers would often call the police at night to clear the place out. The Tenderloin, where sex work,

gambling, and drug use were commonplace, was one of only a few neighborhoods where trans women and drag queens could live openly. Yet they were still regularly subject to police harassment and arrested for the crime of "female impersonation."

And when a policeman in Compton's grabbed a drag queen, she threw a cup of coffee in his face. The cafeteria "erupted," according to Susan Stryker, a historian who directed Screaming Queens. People flipped tables and threw cutlery. Sugar shakers crashed through the restaurant's windows and doors. Drag



Image of Tamara Ching

queens swung their heavy purses at officers. Outside on the street, dozens of people fought back as police forced them into paddy wagons. The crowd trashed a cop car and set a newsstand on fire.

"We just got tired of it," St. Jaymes told Stryker. "We got tired of being harassed. We got tired of being made to go into the men's room when we were dressed like women. We wanted our rights."

If the famous Stonewall riots in New York City were the origin of this nation's gay rights movement, the Tenderloin upheaval three years before was "the transgender community's debut on the stage of American political history," according to Stryker. "It was the first known instance of collective militant queer resistance to police harassment in United States history."

Stonewall is often thought of as an uprising of gay men. In reality, "it was drag queens, Black drag queens, who fought the police at the famous Stonewall Inn rebellion in 1969," wrote lesbian novelist and playwright Sarah Schulman in a 1985 novel. "Years later, a group of nouveau-respectable gays tried to construct a memorial to Stonewall in the park across from the old bar. The piece consisted of two white clone-like thin gay men and two white, young lesbians with perfect noses. They were made of a plaster-like substance, pasty and white as the people who paid for it."

While the legacy of Stonewall was whitewashed, the rage and resistance of the San Francisco group went largely unremarked — even among each other.

"We didn't think this was a big deal," Ching told me. "It was a natural thing for people to do back then, to protest."

Besides memories of police and patrons who were there that night, the only record of the riot that survived into the present is a short article by gay activist Raymond Broshears. He wrote it for the program of the first San Francisco gay pride parade, in 1972. Decades later, Stryker found his account and began to seek out the whole story. Her search for people who had been in the Tenderloin back then who spent time at Compton's or took part in the riot led her to Ching, St. Jaymes and another trans woman named Felicia Elizondo.

Ching grew up in San Francisco. She recalls hanging out with beatniks on Grant Avenue and began doing sex work as a teenager, in 1965. "My mom was an alcoholic and she let me run the streets and do my own thing."

Ching wasn't at the riot that night, but she knew Compton's well. "It was good to go and be seen and talk to people about what happened during the night. To make sure everybody's OK, everyone made their coins, everybody's coming down off drugs and didn't overdose, and that you didn't go to jail that night," she said.

"Compton's nourished people. People would sit there for days drinking a cup of coffee. I would buy a full meal. I don't cook and I loved eating at Compton's — it was like downtown."

The Tenderloin in the 1960s was a red light district and a residential ghetto. Stryker told me that the neighborhood was a particular destination and home to "young people who maybe had been kicked out by their families and were living on the street. And trans people who could lose a job at any moment or not be hired, who wouldn't be rented to, who had to live in crappy residential hotels in a bad part of town, and who had to do survival sex work to support themselves."

"We sold ourselves because we need to make a living but we sold ourselves because we wanted to be loved," Elizondo says in Stryker's film. Ching told me sex work in the Tenderloin empowered her. She had a job with the government but still worked the streets at night.

Whether for survival, pleasure or some combination of both, sex work left women vulnerable to violence and put them in closer contact with police. But even those who weren't hustling had frequent encounters with law enforcement. St. Jaymes, who ran the residential hotel, told Stryker she was arrested frequently, even though she wasn't a sex worker. "If we had lipstick on, if we had mascara on, if our hair was too long, we had to put it under a cap. If the buttons was on the wrong side, like a blouse, they would take you to jail because they felt it was female impersonation."

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BLACK & PINK INCARCERATED FAMILY FEEDBACK! MAIL TO: Black & Pink - FEEDBACK

----rip slip here-----

Black & Pink has been a fiscally sponsored organization for three years by an amazing LGBTQ youth empowerment nonprofit organization. Fiscal sponsorship has allowed Black & Pink to solicit grants and tax-deductible donations without becoming our own nonprofit; in return our fiscal sponsor receives a small percentage of any grant income. As our budget grows, it may exceed that of our fiscal sponsor, which both groups think would be awkward. Also, it is sometimes logistically challenging to coordinate other types of documents that require nonprofit status.

Given that situation, Black & Pink is considering either becoming our own nonprofit, or seeking a different fiscal sponsor with a larger budget. The process of becoming our own nonprofit involves forming and maintaining an official board with official positions, filing Articles of Incorporation, and filling out a few dozen pages of forms for the IRS to review, and each year putting forth accounting documents for audit. **Do you think Black & Pink should do and why? (a) become our own nonprofit, or (b) seek a different fiscal sponsor with a larger budget?**

STRUGGLING FOR RIGHTS CONTINUED

...Continued from Page 9..."The police could harass you at any time," Ching told me. "They would ask you for pieces of ID. You had to have your male ID if you were born male and didn't go through a sex change. They would pat you down, and while they're patting you down, of course they're feeling you up," she continued. "They would arrest you and put you in the big van, Big Bertha, and drive you around town. When they turned a corner they turned sharply, so people would fall. They'd go over a bump, fast down the hill and make you look a mess by the time you got to the booking station."

Police relations with the trans, drag and gay communities in the Tenderloin reached a boiling point in 1966. Across San Francisco resistance was in the air. Local anti-war protests were gaining momentum. Civil rights activists and religious leaders at a Tenderloin church organized to bring government anti-poverty resources to the neighborhood. A group of radical young queers calling themselves Vanguard started pushing back against discrimination by police and business owners. After Compton's management started kicking them out of the restaurant, they picketed outside on July 18, 1966. Viewed in the context of 1960s activism, identity politics and anti-poverty efforts, the riots that occurred a few weeks later seem inevitable.

Though it can take decades to understand motivations for a particular riot or movement of militant resistance in the streets, there are plenty of instances when a group's anger and frustration over injustice is later celebrated as a civil rights victory. We have a parade every year to commemorate the Stonewall riots — three nights when rioters burned down a bar and tried to overturn a paddy wagon. Now that Bruce Jenner has told Diane Sawyer, "I'm a woman," and Oprah interviewed Janet Mock, we can look at a charge like "female impersonation" and see the Compton's riot as another act of resistance against injustice. One day, history books, pundits and academics could very well talk about the recent unrest in Baltimore or Ferguson the same way.

Right after the Compton's episode, Ching heard about what had happened. "To me, nothing was out of the ordinary," she told me. "We lived to survive day to day. We didn't realize we'd made history."

MARRIAGE WILL NEVER SET US FREE PARTS 1 & 2

By Dean Spade & Craig Willse originally published on Organizing Upgrade on September 6, 2013

In recent years, lots of progressive people have been celebrating marriage -- when various states have passed laws recognizing same-sex marriage, when courts have made decisions affirming the legal recognition of same-sex marriage, when politicians have spoken in favor of it. At the same time, many queer activists and scholars have relentlessly critiqued same-sex marriage advocacy. Supporters of marriage sometimes acknowledge those critiques, and respond with something like: While marriage is not for everyone, and won't solve everything, we still need it.

What's the deal? Is same-sex marriage advocacy a progressive cause? Is it in line with Left political projects of racial and economic justice, decolonization, and feminist liberation?

Nope. Same-sex marriage advocacy has accomplished an amazing feat--it has made being anti-homophobic synonymous with being pro-marriage. It has drowned out centuries of critical thinking and activism against the racialized, colonial, and patriarchal processes of state regulation of family and gender through marriage. It is to such an understanding of marriage we first turn.

I. WHAT IS MARRIAGE?

Civil marriage is a tool of social control used by governments to regulate sexuality and family formation by establishing a favored form and rewarding it (in the U.S., for example, with over one thousand benefits). While marriage is being rewarded, other ways of organizing family, relationships and sexual behavior do not receive these benefits and are stigmatized and criminalized. In short, people are punished or rewarded based on whether or not they marry. The idea that same-sex marriage advocacy is a fight for the "freedom to marry" or "equality" is absurd since the existence of legal marriage is a form of coercive regulation in which achieving or not achieving marital status is linked to accessing vital life resources like health care and paths to legalized immigration. There is nothing freeing nor equalizing about such a system.

In her famous 1984 essay, "Thinking Sex," Gayle Rubin described how systems that hierarchically rank sexual practices change as part of maintaining their operations of control. Rubin described how sexuality is divided into those practices that are considered normal and natural--what she called the "charmed circle"-- and those that are considered bad and abnormal--the

"outer limits."

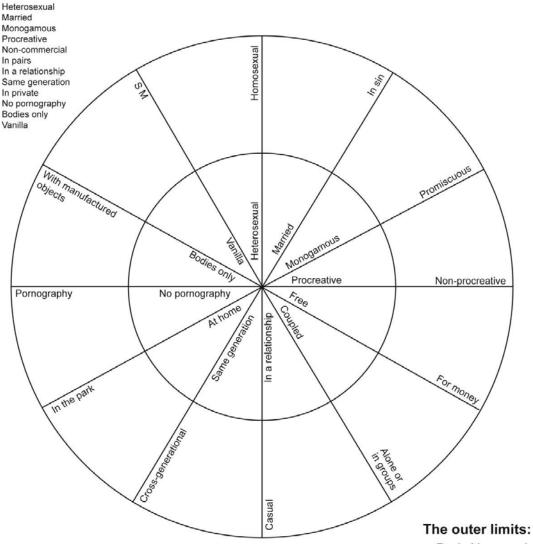
Practices can and do cross from the outer limits to the charmed circle. Unmarried couples living together, or perhaps homosexuality when it is monogamous and married, can move from being highly stigmatized to being considered acceptable. These shifts, however, do not eliminate the ranking of sexual behaviors; in other words, these shifts do not challenge the existence of a charmed circle and outer limits in the first place. Freedom and equality are not achieved when a practice crosses over to being acceptable. Instead, such shifts strengthen the line between what is considered good, healthy, and normal and what remains bad, unhealthy, stigmatized, and criminalized. The line moves to accommodate a few more people, who society suddenly approves of, correcting the system and keeping it in place. The legal marriage system—along with its corollary criminal punishment system, with its laws against lewd behavior, solicitation, indecency and the like—enforces the line between which sexual practices and behaviors are acceptable and rewarded, and which are contemptible and even punishable.

Societal myths about marriage, which are replicated in same-sex marriage advocacy, tell us that marriage is about love, about care for elders and children, about sharing the good life together--even that it is the cornerstone of a happy personal life and a healthy civilization. Feminist, anti-racist, and anti-colonial social movements have contested this, identifying marriage as a system that violently enforces sexual and familial norms. From these social movements, we understand marriage as a technology of social control, exploitation, and dispossession wrapped in a satin ribbon of sexist and heteropatriarchal romance mythology.

Marriage is a tool of anti-Black racism.

Since the founding of the US, regulating family formation has been key to anti-Black racism and violence. Denying the family ties of slaves was essential to slavery—ensuring that children would be born enslaved and maintaining Black people as property rather than persons. After emancipation, the government scrambled to control Black people, coercing marriage among newly freed Black people and criminalizing them for adultery as one pathway of recapturing them into the convict lease system. After Brown v. Board of Education, which challenged formal, legal segregation, illegitimacy laws became a favored way to exclude Black children from programs and services.

The charmed circle: Good, Normal, Natural, Blessed Sexuality



Bad, Abnormal, Unnatural, Damned Sexuality

Homosexual
Unmarried
Promiscuous
Commercial
Alone or in groups
Casual
Cross-generational
In public
Pornography
With manufactured objects
Sadomasochistic

Continued on page 11...

...continued from page 10... The idea that married families and their children are superior was and remains a key tool of anti-Black racism.

Black families have consistently been portrayed as pathological and criminal in academic research and social policy based on marriage rates, most famously in the Moynihan Report. Anti-poor and anti-Black discourse and policymaking frame poverty as a result of the lack of marriage in Black populations. Clinton's 1996 dismantling of welfare programs, which disproportionately harmed Black families, was justified by an explicit discourse about poverty resulting from unmarried parenthood. Under both President George W. Bush and President Barack Obama, "Health Marriage Promotion" initiatives have been used to encourage low-income women to marry, including at times through cash incentives. Demonizing, managing and controlling Black people by applying racist and sexist marital family norms to justify both brutal interventions and "benign neglect" has a long history in the US and remains standard fare.

Marriage is a tool of colonialism.

Colonization often casts invasion as rescuing colonized populations from their backward gender and family systems. We can see this from the land we're writing this on (Washington, D.C. & Washington State) to Afghanistan. Forcing indigenous people to comply with European norms of gender, sexuality and family structure and punishing them for not doing so has been a key tool of US settler colonialism in North America. Marriage has been an important tool of land theft and ethnic cleansing aimed at disappearing indigenous people in many ways. The US encouraged westward settlement by promising male settlers 160 acres to move west, plus an extra 160 if they married and brought a wife. At the same time, the US criminalized traditional indigenous communal living styles, burning longhouses where indigenous people lived communally, eliminating communal landholding methods, and enforcing male individual ownership. Management of gender and family systems was and is essential to displacement and settlement processes. Enforcing gender norms in boarding schools as part of a "civilizing mission," and removing children from native communities through a variety of programs that persist today are key tools of ethnic cleansing and settlement in the US.

Marriage is a tool of xenophobia and immigration enforcement.

From its origins, US immigration law has put in place mechanisms for regulating those migrants it does allow in, always under threat of deportation, and labeling other migrants "undesirable" to both make them more exploitable by their bosses and easier to purge. Keeping out poor people, people with stigmatized health issues, and people of color have been urgent national priorities. Marriage has been one of the key valves of that control. The Page Act of 1875, for example, sought to keep out Asian women, hoping to prevent Asian laborers in the US from reproducing, but allowed the immigration of Asian merchants' wives. Marriage continues to be a deeply unjust tool of immigration control in the US, with marital family ties being one of the few pathways to immigration. One impact of this system is that it keeps people stuck in violent and harmful sexual and family relationships because their immigration status depends on it.

Marriage is a tool of gendered social control.

Feminists have long understood marriage as a tool of social control and labor exploitation. This is why feminists have worked to dismantle the mystique around romance, marriage, child rearing and care--exposing these as cultural fantasies that coerce women into unpaid labor and cultivate sexual violence. They have also worked to change laws to make it easier to get out of marriages, and to de-link marital status from essential things people need (like immigration and health care) because those links trap women and children in violent family relationships.

Marriage is about protecting private property and ensuring maldistribution.

Marriage has always been about who is whose property (women, slaves, children) and who gets what property. Inheritance, employee benefits, insurance claims, taxation, wrongful death claims--all of the benefits associated with marriage are benefits that keep wealth in the hands of the wealthy. Those with no property are less likely to marry, and have less to protect using marriage law. Movements for economic justice are about dismantling property systems that keep people poor---not tinkering with them so that people with wealth can use them more effectively to protect their wealth.

Today's same-sex marriage advocates argue in courts and in the media that marriage is the bedrock of our society, that children need and deserve married parents, and that marriage is the most important relationship people can have. These arguments are the exact opposite of what feminist, anti-racist and anti-colonial movements have been saying for hundreds of years as they sought to dismantle state marriage because of its role in maldistributing life chances and

controlling marginalized populations.

II. COMMON CONTEMPORARY RESPONSES TO CRITIQUES OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE ADVOCACY:

You don't have to get married if you don't want to.

Same-sex marriage has been framed through a paradigm of "choice," that some of us can do this if we want to, and those that don't want to should back off and let us plan our weddings already. But such choices take place in a field of limited options already structured by legal and cultural systems. Coercive systems distribute rewards and punishments-- marriage punishes those who do not participate in it. Saying that marriage is an individual choice hides this. Marriage is part of a system where the government chooses some relationships, family structures and sexual behaviors as the gold standard and rewards them, while others are stigmatized and/or criminalized. Many people are not and never will be in marriage-like relationships. When proponents counter-argue that those who want to get married should be allowed to do so, the damage that the existence of a marriage system does to everyone who is not deemed acceptable through it is either erased or justified. When we look at marriage only as something individuals can choose to do or not do, we abandon any possibility of meaningful resistance or change. Individualized, aesthetic "challenges" like asking wedding guests to donate to charity in lieu of a gift or having a female "best man" become the only political action imaginable. These types of challenges do not work toward dismantling marriage as a system of rewards and punishments. Ultimately, marriage is about control, not about individuals freely choosing from a menu of options.

But marriage is about love and love is revolutionary!

As described above, marriage is about controlling people and property for the benefit of white people, wealthy people and settlers. It does so under the cover of a consumer-driven mythology about love. US popular culture is permeated by a set of myths about sex and romance that feminists have long worked to analyze and dismantle. We are told that people, but especially women, have empty, useless lives unless they are married. Women are encouraged to feel scarcity about the ability to marry—to feel that they better find the right person and convince him to marry them quickly—or else face an empty life. In this equation, women are valued only for conforming to racist and sexist body norms and men are also objectified and ranked according to wealth. These myths drive the diet industry, much of the entertainment industry, and certainly the gigantic wedding industry (\$40 billion per year in the US), which is based on people's terrified attempts to appear as wealthy, skinny, and normative as possible for one heavily documented day. Feminists understand the scarcity and insecurity that women are trained to experience about love, romance and marriage as a form of coercion, pushing women into exploitative and abusive sexual relationships and family roles. Media messaging about how essential marriage and childrearing is for women to have a meaningful life is part of an ongoing conservative backlash against feminist work that sought to free women from violence and unpaid domestic labor.

This does not mean that people do not experience love in many ways, including in romantic relationships. But the system of marriage is not about the government wanting to recognize people's love and support it—it is about controlling people and resources. Same sex marriage advocacy has bolstered conservative mythologies about how marriage is about love and is the best way to have a family.

But if I want to express my love this way, stop telling me how to be queer!

One common response to critiques of same-sex marriage advocacy is defensiveness by those who are married or want to be married. These people often claim to feel judged by the critics. This response, reducing a systemic critique to a feeling of discomfort about being individually judged, is so disappointing coming from anyone on the Left! Haven't we learned to recognize that we are implicated in oppressive systems, and even benefit from them? Don't we know how to hear a critique of a system that we're implicated in and realize that we should not silence it to dispel our discomfort, or pretend to be victimized by the critique because it is hard to recognize our own privilege? Okay, we're not great at it, but let's work on that. It is absurd for married people or people who want to marry to paint themselves as victims of judgment when someone critiques the institution of marriage while the entire society is organized to support them for marrying.

Critics of marriage are not just individual anti-assimilationists judging other individuals for assimilating. The critique of marriage is not about promoting one kind of queer culture over another, it is about material distribution. People should have whatever parties and dates they want. The point is that they should not be rewarded for that with immigration status or health care. When critiques of marriage are reduced to just being about assimilation, all the racial and economic justice and decolonial analysis is left out, which is probably why this reductionist version gets the most play. Don't get us wrong, the anti-assimilation argument is an important rallying cry: We don't want to marry, we just want

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STRUGGLING FOR RIGHTS CONTINUED

...Continued from page 11...to fuck. Queer counterculture does matter, because for some people in some places and times it has been a key tool for survival and producing alternatives, but the critique of marriage should not be boiled down to an aestheticized radical queer counterculture. The anti-assimilation argument alone risks reifying the "choice model" – as if we can opt in and out of these systems. But in fact we all are implicated in heteropatriarchy, colonialism, white supremacy, and capitalism. The question becomes about how we survive in those systems while dismantling them. The goal is to build a world where everyone gets what they need and it is not conditioned on conforming to sexual, gender or family norms. Dismissing critics of marriage as judgey queers dangerously silences important conversations about movement strategy.

But it will get people health care and immigration status.

Why should anyone have to get married to get health care or immigration status? Same sex marriage advocacy is sold as a method of getting people vitally needed resources, but most undocumented queer people don't have a partner who is a citizen and most uninsured/unemployed queer people don't have a partner with a job with health benefits. People tend to date in their own class statuses so we cannot partner our way out of immigration and health care crises, nor is it acceptable for our movements to endorse that kind of coercion. Same-sex marriage advocacy is not a strategy for really attacking these problems. At best it helps a few of the most privileged get these necessities, but those in the worst circumstances see no change.

It is unethical for movements to prioritize those with the most access. We should prioritize those vulnerable to the most severe manifestations of homophobia and transphobia. That would mean putting resources toward real solutions to these problems---the struggles against immigration enforcement

and for health care access for all—and bringing particular insight about homophobia and transphobia to these struggles. Legalizing same-sex marriage puts a stamp of "equality" on systems that remain brutally harmful, because a few more-privileged people will get something from the change.

A real approach to changing these systems includes asking why marital status is tied to immigration and health care access, how queer and trans people are impacted by immigration imprisonment and deportation, and how homophobia and transphobia create negative health outcomes and block health care access. There are big fights going on to stop immigration enforcement expansion, end border militarization, detention and deportation and stop health care profiteers from bleeding us all dry. Unfortunately, the biggest, richest gay organizations have not put those fights at the center--even though they are the real pathways to addressing queer and trans immigration and health care problems--because they've poured almost everything into marriage (the rest to military service and expanding criminal punishment). Meanwhile, straight people on the Left have gotten convinced that they have to be in favor of same-sex marriage or else they are homophobic, because they have been told it will solve important problems facing queer people.

[1] Excerpt of Chart from Bassichis, Lee and Spade, Building an Abolitionist Trans & Queer Movement with Everything We've Got, in Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex (eds. Stanley and Smith).

THE BIG PROBLEMS	THE OFFICIAL LESBIAN & GAY SOLUTIONS	OTHER QUEER POLITICAL APPROACHES
Queer and trans people, poor people, people of color, and immigrants have minimal access to quality health care	Legalize same-sex marriage to allow people with health benefits from their jobs to share with same- sex partners	Medicaid/Medicare activism; fight for universal healthcare; fight for transgender health benefits; protest deadly medical neglect of people in state custody
Unfair and punitive immigration system	Legalize same-sex marriage to allow same-sex international couples to apply for legal residency for the non-U.S. citizen spouse	Oppose the use of immigration policy to criminalize people of color, exploit workers, and maintain deadly wealth gap between the U.S. and the global south; support current detainees; engage in local and national campaigns against "Secure Communities" and other federal programs that increase racial profiling and deportation
Queer families are vulnerable to legal intervention and separation from the state and/or non-queer people	Legalize same sex marriage to provide a route to "legalize" families with two parents of the same sex; pass laws banning adoption discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation	Join with other people targeted by family law and the child welfare system (poor families, imprisoned parents, native families, families of color, people with disabilities) to fight for community and family self-determination and the rights of people to keep their kids in their families & communities
Institutions fail to recognize family connections outside of heterosexual marriage in contexts like hospital visitation and inheritance	Legalize same-sex marriage to formally recognize same-sex partners in the eyes of the law	Change policies like hospital visitation to recognize a variety of family structures, not just opposite sex and same sex couples; abolish inheritance and demand radical redistribution of wealth and an end to poverty

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Advocacy Requests- Include details about situation and thoughts about how calls or letters might help	Black & Pink - Advocacy
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